

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

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3/15/06*

Please replace paragraph [1015] with the following amended paragraph:

[1015] Systems, structures and techniques described herein provide a mechanism for transforming, representing and/or manipulating hierarchically-organized data in a way that efficiently identifies and/or encodes identical or equivalent instances. In this way, applications and other software systems that efficiently handle such data organizations are facilitated. Trees (typically implemented as a hierarchy of nodes traversed using pointer chains) are but one example of an hierarchically-organized data structure. In particular, persons of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that other encodings may be hierarchical in organization. For example, without limitation, serialized or string encodings may exhibit hierarchical organization. In particular, both information encoded using markup languages (e.g., XML) and information encoded as lists of lists often exhibit hierarchical organization. Although the description that follows employs illustrative hierarchical data organizations that may resemble traditional, pointer traversed tree structures of nodes, persons of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that such data organizations and associated encodings and operations are merely illustrative and the scope of the present invention is not limited thereto. Computer program products may be encoded in one or more At least one computer readable media-medium is selected from the set of a disk, tape, or other magnetic, optical, and electronic storage medium. Such products may also be encoded for transmission in a network, wireline, wireless, or other communications medium. Rather, the invention is defined by the claims that follow.